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IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 9 and 12-14 as indicated in the Listing of Claims.

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A diverter switch for branching off bulk-material flows, having a rotary plug (1) disposed in a stationary housing (2) having three connecting openings (4, 5, 6) said rotary plug and housing providing a first position connecting a first connecting-opening pair (4, 5) a second position, connecting a second connecting-opening pair (4, 6), and a gap (10) disposed between said rotary plug (1) and said housing wherein the improvement comprises a rotary plug (1) and~~/or~~ housing (2) having at least one labyrinth seal arrangement (7), having ~~at least one~~ a labyrinth seal groove (8, 9)~~, wherein the labyrinth seal groove (8) of~~ comprised of a plurality of seal grooves disposed on the rotary plug (1) ~~is arranged largely~~

~~continuously around at least one opening of a through-channel (3) and is axially displaced from an end of said through-channel, and/or in that the labyrinth seal groove (9) of the housing (2) is arranged largely continuously~~ and a plurality of seal grooves disposed around at least one of the connecting openings (4, 5, 6) ~~and is axially or radially displaced from an end of a connecting opening of said housing~~ in said housing (2).

2. (Currently amended) The diverter switch according to Claim 1~~, further comprising a~~ wherein said plurality of ~~labyrinth~~ seal grooves (8, 9) are arranged next to one another.

3. (Original) The diverter switch according to claim 1 or 2 further comprising at least one feed opening (12) for a feed channel for feeding a gap fluid into the gap (10) between rotary plug (1) and housing (2).

4. (Original) The diverter switch according to claim 1 or 2 further comprising a feed opening (12) in the labyrinth seal groove (8, 9).

5. (Currently amended) The diverter switch according to claim 1 or 2 further comprising means for insuring the pressure of ~~the~~ a gap fluid is greater than a pressure of ~~the~~ a conveying fluid.

6. (Currently amended) The diverter switch according to claim 1 or 2 wherein the composition of ~~the~~ a gap fluid is substantially the same as the composition of ~~the~~ a conveying fluid.

7. (Original) The diverter switch according to claim 1 or 2 wherein the maximum width (W) of the gap (10) is smaller than or equal to five-tenths of a millimetre ($W \leq 5/10$ mm).

8. (Original) The diverter switch of claim 1 or 2 wherein the maximum width (W) of the gap 10 is smaller than or equal to three-tenths of a millimetre ($W \leq 3/10$ mm).

9. (Currently amended) A fluid diverter device comprising:

(a) a housing having a plurality of through channels and a seat for a rotatable plug;

(b) a rotatable plug disposed in said seat selectively rotatably interconnecting at least one of said plurality of through channels;

(c) a labyrinth seal having a plurality of sealing grooves ~~displaced axially or radially from an end of one of said plurality of through channels and~~ disposed ~~between said housing~~

and on said rotatable plug and a plurality of sealing grooves disposed in said seat for said rotatable plug; and

(d) a fluid gap seal disposed intermediate said housing and said rotatable plug in communication with said at least one seal groove plurality of sealing grooves of said labyrinth seal.

10. (Original) The fluid diverter of claim 9 further comprising at least one feed channel in communication with said fluid gap seal.

11. (Original) The fluid diverter of claim 10 further comprising means for increasing the pressure of the gap fluid to a pressure greater than the conveying fluid.

12. (Currently amended) The fluid diverter of claim 9 wherein said plurality of grooves ~~are~~ disposed on said rotatable plug ~~and are disposed on said plurality of channels~~ ~~housing~~ are concentrically arranged.

13. (Currently amended) The fluid diverter of claim 12 wherein said plurality of grooves disposed on said rotatable plug and said plurality of grooves disposed ~~on~~ in said ~~housing~~ seat are concentrically staggered.

14. (Currently amended) A fluid device for diverting fluids comprising:

(a) a housing having a plurality of through channels and a seat for a rotatable plug;

(b) a rotatable plug disposed in said seat selectively

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rotatably interconnecting at least two of said plurality of through channels;

(c) a labyrinth seal having a plurality of concentric grooves disposed ~~in~~ on said rotatable plug ~~or~~ and in said seat around at least one opening of said plurality of through channels, said plurality of concentric grooves ~~being axially or radially displaced from at least one end of said plurality of through channels~~ on said rotatable plug and in said seat being concentrically staggered;

(d) a fluid gap seal disposed in said seat for said rotatable plug or in said rotatable plug; and

(e) a fluid feed channel communicating with said fluid gap seal.

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